# 2026 OPEN FUNDING CALL FOR OVARIAN CANCER RESEARCH IN SASKATCHEWAN: COMPETITION GUIDELINES

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## B. Key Dates

| | |
|---|---|
| Competition materials available online | On or before Sept 14, 2026 |
| **Full application submission deadline** | **October 30, 2026** |
| Application review period | November 2026 |
| Competition results communicated to researchers | December 2026 |
| Funding start date | January 2027 |

## C. Competition Funder

Ovarian Cancer Canada (OCC) is the only national organization dedicated to overcoming ovarian cancer (OC). Our mission is to boldly and unapologetically take action against OC until the number of deaths from this disease is zero. Central to this is our commitment to investing in all stages of research from bench to bedside to drive scientific progress and improvements to patient-centered care in OC prevention, early detection, treatment and survivorship (https://ovariancanada.org/about-our-research).

## D. Project eligibility & evaluation criteria

**This competition is open to all clinical and scientific researchers studying OC in Saskatchewan. The goal is to fund the most innovative and impactful projects and initiatives with the greatest potential to benefit OC patients in the province.** Projects of all types, at all stages of research, and throughout the OC continuum (prevention, diagnosis, treatment, survivorship) are eligible to apply. In line with OCC research principles, meaningful engagement with patients as research partners – throughout the planning and implementation of the project - is required. Types of research could include:

- Discovery-based, pre-clinical or translational research
- Clinical trials, including pragmatic clinical trials and correlative studies on longitudinally collected biospecimens
- Patient-centred surveys or focus groups
- Research on social determinants of health in relation to the OC experience
- Collection and analysis of relevant health administrative data
- Implementation research
- Scientific resources e.g., research models, tissue banks, biorepositories

The following criteria will be considered when evaluating applications:

- Project fit
- Scientific merit/research strategy
- Potential for impact
- Qualifications of research team/research environment
- Innovation/novelty
- Patient engagement
- Clarity of communication
- Feasibility & readiness
- Strength of supporting/preliminary data
- Budget & timelines

## E. Applicant eligibility criteria

Study principal applicant/s must hold a research position at an academic institution in Saskatchewan and be able to hold research funds at their institution. Study co-applicants and collaborators may be affiliated with institutions outside of Saskatchewan; however, funds must be spent within the province.

## F. Multiple applications

There are no limits on the number of applications submitted, as either a principal applicant, co-applicant or collaborator.

## G. Budget & study term

A total funding envelope of **$550,000** has been allocated to this competition. There are no set per-project limits for funding requests by applicants; the number of projects to be funded will therefore depend on the balance of funds requested and project rankings by the independent review panel. Funding for grantees will start upon execution of the funding agreement with the Principal Applicant's host institution. Applicants can request a study term for completion of project deliverables of up to 3 years. Eligible and ineligible expenses are listed below:

***Eligible expenses***

- Full or partial salary support to staff (e.g., research coordinators, assistants, associates, technicians) or trainees (e.g., graduate students and post-doctoral fellows) responsible for the work. Guidelines for trainee annual salaries are below:
    - MSc students - $27,500
    - PhD students - $35,000
    - Postdoctoral fellows - $50,000
- Consumables and service costs (e.g., core facilities) required to carry out the work;
- Costs related to acquisition, processing and molecular characterization of human biospecimens;
- Costs associated with data collection and analysis;
- Costs related to engaging patients in the planning and implementation of the project, including but not limited to honoraria for patient partners;
- Costs related to sharing of materials (e.g., clinical biospecimens, research models) and data to facilitate multi-institutional collaboration;
- Publication fees up to $4,000;
- Up to $2,000 per year for attending meetings, seminars or conferences (e.g., registration, travel, accommodation).

***Ineligible expenses***

- Remuneration of Principal Applicant, Co-Applicants or Collaborators (with the exception of honoraria for patient partners);
- Purchase of equipment, unless approved by OCC in advance;
- Indirect costs to institutions;
- Sabbatical or parental leave;
- Publication fees in excess of $4,000*;
- Meeting, seminar or conference expenses in excess of $2,000 per year.

**Paid invoices for manuscript publication fees more than $4,000 can be submitted to atone@ovariancanada.org for consideration of partial or complete reimbursement.*

## H. Engaging with patients as research partners

All projects funded through this competition are **required** to meaningfully engage patient partners throughout the study period, for instance through co-developing research questions and study design, ensuring recruitment methods are feasible and acceptable to the patient population, interpreting results and knowledge translation. A high-level guide for scientific and clinical researchers who want to engage with patients in their research can be found in **Annex A** and here.

Applicants may choose to collaborate with local patient partners within their community or with OCC's Patient Partners in Research (PPiR) program to facilitate patient-researcher partnerships. To collaborate with members of the national PPiR team, send an email to Dr. Jessica Lawson (jlawson@ovariancanada.org) with the subject line **"OCC x SK_PPiR Research Inquiry"**, a completed **Research Engagement Details Form** (here) and general availability for an introductory meeting. All research teams collaborating with members of the PPiR team must read and sign a **Research Partner Agreement** (here) following the introductory meeting.

**Please note that requests will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis;** we cannot guarantee the fulfillment of last-minute requests.

## I. Application process & instructions

Ovarian Cancer Canada will administer and manage this single-stage (full application only) competition. All applications must be submitted in English to facilitate peer review by international reviewers. To be considered a complete submission, the following must be completed by **October 30, 2026 @11:59pm ET:**

1) Completion of the **Registration for Application Submission** online form: here

2) A single **PDF document** containing all components listed below, emailed to jlawson@ovariancanada.org with the subject line **"OCCxSK Ovarian Cancer Competition 2026_lastname."**

   Description and page limits for specific written components are indicated. All components must follow the same general formatting guidelines: single-spaced, minimum of ¾" (2 cm) margin all four sides, 12pt font. *Please note that non-compliance to the guidelines could lead to an administrative rejection of a submitted application prior to its scientific evaluation.*

a) **Scientific abstract (max 1 page)**
   - ❖ Describe the rationale, research aims, methodology, anticipated outcomes and their potential impact for patients.

b) **Lay summary (max 1 page)**
   - ❖ Summary of the research project in lay terms, to be understood by those who are not in biomedical research.

c) **Research proposal (max 5 pages)**
   - ❖ Describe the proposed research project, considering the following elements:
     - Rationale and background;
     - Proposed aim(s)/objectives and hypotheses;
     - Study design/methodology
     - Patient engagement plan;
     - How the proposed project fits eligibility/evaluation criteria;
     - Significance of the proposed research and expected outcomes;
     - Study timelines.

d) **Research team (max 1 page)**
   - ❖ Describe the expertise and contributions of the applicant, co-applicant(s) and other research personnel involved in the proposed research.

e) **Budget summary and justification (max 2 pages)**
   - ❖ All budget items, including salaries and stipends, must be justified in terms of the objectives and milestones of the project. For every item in the budget, the applicant must provide a complete breakdown of the amounts requested for the project.

3) **Figures & Tables (max 3 pages)**
   - ❖ Preliminary data and/or study schema

4) **References (no page limit)**
   - ❖ List of references cited in the Research Proposal

5) **Letters of Support (no limit)**
   - ❖ ***Mandatory:*** From lead institution, ensuring that the necessary infrastructure support is available for the project
   - ❖ ***Optional:*** From collaborators and service providers, as applicable

6) **Abbreviated CV / Biosketch**

Required for the Principal Applicant and all co-applicants (including academic and/or patient partners). No specific format is required; however, the following information must be included:

***Academic applicants:***

- Academic degrees
- Details of employment since graduation, including post-doctoral research and/or clinical fellowships
- 3-5 research and/or clinical contributions
- List of publications (including submitted manuscripts and manuscripts in preparation) during the last 5-full time or equivalent working years
- Grant support received in the past 5 years + relevant pending support – please note any potential overlaps with the current submission

***Named patient partners:***

- Personal Statement: *Briefly describe why your personal and/or professional experience make you particularly well suited for your role in the proposed project.*
- Experience, Leadership, Engagement: *List personal and professional experience relevant to the project/study topic, including participation with community and volunteer organizations and membership or leadership in relevant organizations and advisory groups.*
- Engagement in Research/Implementation: *Outline past engagement in patient-centered outcomes project/studies, including participation in an advisory capacity, publications authored or co-authored and presentations made.*

The submission deadlines will be strictly enforced. Only complete applications received by the submission deadline will be considered. Proposals that do not respect the guidelines will be rejected.

## J. Independent review process

All applications – excluding confidential demographic information - will be evaluated by an independent expert review committee assembled by OCC, made up of Canadian and/or international clinical and scientific experts ("academic reviewers") and individuals with lived experience of ovarian cancer ("patient reviewers"). OCC has years of experience and processes in place for training of patients to participate in grant review panels and manage any potential conflicts of interest with submitted applications that may arise from patient-researcher collaborations. The selection of reviewers will be made based on expertise and compliance with OCC's Research Conflict of Interest (COI) and Confidentiality Policy (here).

All committee members are required to sign a Research Policy Declaration Form (here) prior to receipt of their assigned applications.

Each proposal will be initially reviewed and scored by 2-3 academic reviewers and 2-3 patient reviewers, using evaluation criteria specific to each reviewer type (academic, patient). At the final committee meeting, the proposal will be presented, discussed and scored. *Note:* post-discussion consensus scores will be set by assigned academic reviewers, followed by voting by all panel members including patient reviewers *(voting limited to within +/-10% of the consensus score)*. The final rank-order list will be reviewed by OCC leadership, with funding recommendations made to the CEO/Board of Directors and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health for approval.

**K. Research ethics & institutional policies**

Prior to commencing OCC-funded research activities, researchers shall ensure that the research protocol is consistent with the principles set out in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and is reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Board at each participating institution. All Research Ethics Board approval letters shall be forwarded to OCC's Director, Research at atone@ovariancanada.org.

It remains the responsibility of the principal applicant, co-applicants and collaborators to respect the rules and policies of their institutions.

**L. Reporting requirements**

All award recipients will be required to provide regular updates on progress and spending to OCC as a condition of funding. Reporting templates and deadlines will be provided to recipients upon notice of funding.

**M. Contact**

For questions regarding the competition, please contact Jessica Lawson, PhD (Research Coordinator; jlawson@ovariancanada.org)

For other questions related to research at OCC, contact Alicia Tone, PhD (Director, Research; atone@ovariancanada.org)

# ENGAGING PATIENTS IN YOUR RESEARCH: A SNAPSHOT FOR SCIENTIFIC AND CLINICAL RESEARCHERS

## DESIGNING A PATIENT ENGAGEMENT PLAN

A detailed plan for patient engagement is becoming a common requirement for scientific funding applications. Below are some guiding questions that can help when designing this plan.

| Phase of Research | Guiding Questions for Engagement |
|---|---|
| **Pre-Project Planning** | • Have patient partners been involved from the start?<br>• How have patient priorities informed the research question or design?<br>• Are diverse patient voices represented? |
| **Proposal Development** | • Were patient partners consulted or co-authors in the proposal?<br>• Was patient compensation and support built into the budget? |
| **Research Implementation** | • Are patient partners involved in key decisions as the project progresses?<br>• Are roles, expectations, and timelines clearly communicated? |
| **Analysis & Interpretation** | • How will input from patient partners influence how the study results are explained or understood?<br>• Are patient experiences being reflected in how the findings are described? |
| **Knowledge Translation & Dissemination** | • Will patient partners help shape how and where findings are shared?<br>• Are plain language summaries being co-created with patients? |
| **Follow-Up & Evaluation** | • Have patient partners received updates on how their contributions made an impact?<br>• How is input from patient partners being collected and used?<br>• Are there opportunities for ongoing involvement or future collaboration? |

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Advancing Research Alongside Patient Partners: Next-Generation Best Practices for Effective Collaboration in Health Research (Ovarian Cancer Canada)

Patient Partner Compensation Guidelines (CIHR )

Patient Engagement in Research Training Program (CIHR)

## COLLABORATE WITH OUR TEAM

jlawson@ovariancanada.org

ovariancanada.org/for-researchers#patient-partners

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## LEVELS OF PATIENT ENGAGEMENT

The extent of patient engagement increases with each level. The appropriate level will depend on the specific research engagement, and can evolve over time.

**INFORM**
Researcher gives a presentation to a patient or lay public audience

**PARTICIPATE**
Patient enrolls in a clinical trial, or fills out a survey as part of a research study

**CONSULT**
Researcher seeks patient feedback on a specific activity or aspect of their project

**INVOLVE**
Patient works directly with a research team throughout a project

**COLLABORATE**
Patient and researcher in equal partnership in all aspects of a research project

**LEAD**
Patient takes on leadership role to drive research decisions or activities

## PATIENT PARTNERS AS EMBEDDED TEAM MEMBERS

Shown below are examples of collaboration opportunities throughout the lifecycle of a research project.

Ideation & background research

Develop hypothesis & research questions

Draft & refine research proposal for funding applications

Start-up: finalize patient-facing materials, recruitment strategies, trial logistics

Ongoing touchpoints with research team

Collection, analysis & interpretation of study data

Sharing of research results with various audiences

Project wrap-up and next steps